

# PACIFIC WEEKLY

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A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

---

JUNE 21, 1935



**LIBERTY**  
BY LINCOLN STEFFENS



**DOWN WITH PEACE!**  
BY WINTHROP RUTLEGE



**A NEW YORK LETTER**  
FROM ROBERT CANTWELL

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A WESTERN JOURNAL OF FACT AND OPINION

VOLUME II

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## NOTES AND COMMENT

### HOW THEY ARE MADE

HERE'S a woman, speaking from the floor of a courtroom to the judge above her:

"I don't want to make trouble for the little girl. After all, it is his child and hers. The child is living with her own mother and father."

She is talking about her husband and the woman he is now living with; the woman whom he brought into his home and who bore him a child from conception in his home. She is pleading for this child; that the little girl's life shall not be made unhappy through separation from her own father and mother. She asks to "get out of the picture", as her attorney puts it.

But what does the learned judge reply, working himself up into a fever of agitation?

"This is a terrible situation . . . This is a fantastic situation. The juvenile authorities should take action here. I can't understand your attitude. Adultery is a felony . . . "

"I don't want to make trouble for the little girl," says the abandoned wife. "Nothing will be gained."

"The court doesn't see it that way," replied the judge sternly. "The morals of the people must be protected."

The mis-used wife wants protection for that little girl; wants to save her from publicity, wants to withdraw from the case through a divorce and give the child a chance at the start of her life, appreciating that she is not to blame. But Superior Judge Mogan of San Francisco is insistent that the whole story be brought out into the light, that the child be turned over to the juvenile court and the father prosecuted.

He wants the public protected. The public should be protected—protected from such a judge. "Adultery is a felony," he cries. Judge Mogan, there are certain things worse than adultery, and not the least of these are crimes which it is possible for a Superior Judge to commit.

You take this child away from her father and mother. You send her father to jail for committing adultery. You hold up her mother to publicity and shame. You let hang over her for years the stigma of her birth. You start her off in a public institution where the environment tends to a corruption of all

but the strongest of human beings.

All right. Some day, when you're a very old man, you'll read about a bandit's moll who helped him mow down a peace officer or about a woman who in the shambles of a dingy apartment shot a brute and killed herself, or about a hag at 25 picked up in the stupor of morphine. And then won't you be surprised to discover that one of these little ladies you started on her way while you were "protecting the morals of the people" and shouting "Adultery is a felony"?

### "LABOR" BATTLES REDS

SAN FRANCISCO newspapers, principally the *Examiner* and the *Chronicle*, are supreme humorists of the unconscious and unintentional variety. They both did a tremendously good job of it last Monday. The *Chronicle's* humor was hilariously funny; the *Examiner's* brought you up with a surprised laugh.

It is evident from the *Chronicle's* front page, eight-column headline, "State Labor Battles Reds", that it made up its mind to out-Hearst the *Examiner*. It carried this determination into the lead of its story which began: "Union Labor in California yesterday declared war against communists". Of course, that is funny because there was nothing beyond this in the story to indicate that Union Labor in California has declared war against communists, but only that union labor leaders in the executive council of the California State Federation of Labor, had declared war against communists. This is something entirely different, as the *Chronicle* and the executive council will rapidly learn. The very thing which occasioned this girding up of the loins of the executive council—the removal of Paul Scharrenberg from the Seamen's Union, by an almost unanimous vote of the union—clearly indicates this. Paul Scharrenberg has repeatedly and deliberately betrayed union labor in California and it has been repeatedly proved that he has. The Seamen's Union finally had enough gumption to repudiate him and now it is the executive council of the State Federation that is resenting this action against its veteran secretary, not the rank and file of Union Labor in California.

But what a shock it must have been to the *Chronicle* to discover that the *Examiner's* contribution to unconscious humor on that Monday morning was to un-Hearst itself for the nonce and to tell the truth. The *Examiner's* story on the action of the executive council of the State Federation of Labor begins with this sentence: "Conservative leaders of organized labor in California yesterday took the first step in a new and vigorous campaign to rid their ranks of Communists and radicals."

"Conservative leaders", eh? Right you are, and damned conservative leaders; the sort of conservative leaders who will compromise at every step along the road; who for expediency's sake will accept a nickel where vigorous, unafraid, militant and determined action would have won a dollar. Paul Scharrenberg, whose repudiation by the Seamen's Union the executive council so far resents as to be silly enough to blame it on communists, is that sort of man, even less than that sort, as proved by no other measure than his own activities in labor councils.

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propaganda, and it claims to have done its stint toward the ousting of Scharrenberg from the Seamen's Union in the publication of an exposé of his tactics and that of the California Federation in relation to the repeal of the Criminal Syndicalism law. To those who may still retain a belief that Scharrenberg is a devoted and conscientious labor leader this magazine suggests a reading of "Organized Labor and Criminal Syndicalism," which we published in the issue of May 10.

But to go back to the charge of the State Federation that communists are to blame for the almost unanimous action of the seamen in ousting Scharrenberg from their union, it appears to us that a high compliment is being paid thereby to the communists and their power, or their truth. They do seem to be getting places and doing things in spite of the united forces of hollow patriotism unwittingly playing into the hands of the employers and exploiters of labor. As the Western Worker of San Francisco so aptly puts it:

The Communists seem to have better success with inadequate equipment and the stiffest opposition than the employers have, with the most elaborate paraphernalia and nothing standing in their way.

There is a reason for this. The employers are faced with a much more difficult task. They have to convince the public of things which are obviously not true.

### MR. HOOVER TALKS

**H**ere's another individual who from his bed of roses, as far as personal comfort and that of his family are concerned, seeks to point out to us how nobility sits upon the shoulders of the capitalists, the employers, the profit-seekers of the country; that God's in his heaven and all's right with the world, or would be if the Democratic Party, and particularly Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt, could be eliminated.

To 699 graduates of Stanford University one Herbert Hoover who, if you recall, was president of the United States some little time back, said these memorable words:

My first serious entrance into the economic world was by manual labor. But somehow, both in the stages of manual labor and professional work, I missed the discovery I was a wage slave.

I at least had the feeling that it was my option that if

I did not like a particular profit taker I could find another somewhere. But what mainly interests you is the fact that I found them a cheery, helpful lot of folk who took an enormous interest in helping young people to get a start and get along in life. And you will find that is the case today.

Those are words to bring cheer to the hearts of street carmen in Omaha, Nebraska; lumber laborers in Oregon and Washington, and miners in Jackson, California.

The ex-president continued along this line with more words and words and words.

Surely our social objective must be to upbuild and protect the family and home. In that home there must be security, protection from economic and governmental exploitation.

Fear of ruin, poverty, old age and dislocation must be removed from the individual and thus from the heart of the family.

Social security must be builded on a cult of work, not cult of leisure. The judgment on Adam has not yet been reversed. That proscription was for his better health and life.

None of these attainments is beyond America's capacity to realize. They can be nurtured only through sacrifice in our generation, through faith, courage and a steady will. Therein is to be found the new spirit in American life and a new triumph in your generation.

We can imagine the 699 graduates of Stanford got a lot of satisfaction out of that sort of verbiage. It is surprising how many words can be uttered without getting you anywhere; that is, anywhere that you care at all about going. On the other hand, it requires a certain amount of cleverness to make a long speech intended not to convey your meaning, but to hide it. And Stanford is just about the place to display that cleverness.



### LIBERTY

BY LINCOLN STEFFENS

**L**IBERALS say the Communists do not believe in, do not want and in Soviet Russia do not practise civil liberties. That seemed absurd to me, but listening attentively to them I am convinced that these liberals are sincere. They tell one tales that carry the evidence that persuades them. And I can't tell them what makes me sure that civil liberties are one—only one but really one, of the objectives of "The Revolution" and an achievement of the temporary State of Soviet Russia. Let me try once more.

All men have always wanted liberty. Some men—notably the English, French and Americans have fought for and partly won it. When our Revolution achieved the precious thing, we buried the treasure in our Constitution, for we Anglo-Americans believe in the Law and the Fundamental Law of the Land is the safest, surest depository we know for valuables. So we planted our hard-won liberty in the Constitution in unmistakable WORDS and went off about our business which was to buy and build up privileges which cannot exist

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in a state of freedom. They cannot exist there because privileges are advantages; they are sources of unearned wealth and power, one over the other, which the possessors cannot help using against the unpossessed to dispossess them further of the wealth and liberties they have—according to the Law. The dispossessed, observing the advantages of the privileged, try to get privileges and the privileged, defending their own, bribe and so buy more powers of state. Calling their privileges Property and their prominence in power Law and Order, they get the police powers to defend privilege and property rather than freedom of speech and the constitutional rights of the common, the unprivileged citizen.

The libertarians saw this and under the name of radicals and Communists inferred that our liberties were not soundly founded when they were planted in the law. They set out to plant them in a surer spot. Seeing that the law was a hole where Liberty could not grow they decided they would try it in the top soil where Privilege thrived so well, in our economics, in our business. That was the time our prophets began to turn our thoughts from spiritual values and costs to materialistic and economic considerations and man advanced from reasons to the causes of things.

Our prophets sought the new basis for liberty and our other ideals and wishes in the economic subsoil of society where everything seemed to grow so well, evil and good too. But to prepare this subsoil it was necessary to clear the ground and weed it by removing the roots of all privileges. This meant the removal of the causes of war, graft, individual riches and mass poverty—of all our familiar vices. We are now in the clearing period, the stage when man en masse has to be lifted up almost as a body to prize and plant his universal goods on the fertile foundation of our subsoil.

Not liberty alone. The Communists see that there is in the law a bottom where all our social evils were planted, where they thrive to our hurt together and they declare that this economic basis, which they call class-interest, has to be wiped out altogether. This means a class struggle, a struggle of class against class till there are no classes, no foundation for any one class interest. On the theory that when there is no class interest to defend there will be no cause for fear of, for instance, freedom of any sort; no need of a violent police force; no temptation to injustice; no check on education.

Now after the Revolution in Soviet Russia, with the foundation of privileges (with all class privileges) removed or being removed, the Asiatics find that they are living and growing upon a cleared subsoil where develop all the common goods civilized men can want. They haven't developed all these goods yet. Lenin once said to me that it would take "a generation, or two or—or more" to get all we want now and then we shall develop more wants. But the grand achievement there is that they are aware that they have a basis, a foundation upon which evolution is possible. Upon which they can have without opposition any ideas, thoughts, works that are good for them all. Still at work on this foundation, they may neglect absolute liberty. They are getting all they all need of liberty, and they are not in any hurry about the rest, the absolute which cannot come till they feel safe to abolish government altogether. Which they intend to do. What the anarchists demand now, what Emma Goldman misses in Soviet Russia, that anarchism which we all yearn for, is an ultimate aim of Communism. And of the Russians, as Lenin often told the Anarchists and the liberals.

So then I'll conclude, the Communists do want liberty, for

instance, but first and now, they would concentrate all our efforts on the revolutionary job of clearing the ground upon which freedom and justice, health and wealth and art can grow.



## ROOSEVELT'S NEATEST TRICK

BY HARRY CONOVER

**W**HEN the Roosevelt Administration rode into power in 1933 as an answer on the part of the American public to its dissatisfaction with the muddling-through policy of Hoover, the new President brought new hope to those who had suffered four years of continued and increasing misery. He launched an attack against the "money changers", promised a "controlled capitalism" and outlined a "new deal". The leftward temper of the voters had properly been sounded: labor cheered his promised support of collective bargaining in the proposed National Recovery Act; the consumers praised the man who had remembered them; all defended the new leader from the attacks upon his program by the reactionary papers and made their support of him so well known that even these pretendedly hostile organs "acquiesced" before one who said he would forever afterwards curb them. The danger sign in left-driving politics was safely passed, everyone sat back for a hopeful period of watchful waiting. Action was no longer demanded, the President would save everyone. And who could doubt his success? Had he not said himself that if he failed, he would be the last American President?

Labor and the consumer waited. Codes were established. Section 7A was written in, the propaganda baggage was thrown into the N. R. A. train. It moved along at a fast pace. Corporation profits and dividends increased in some instances by a thousand per cent. There were some casualties for the small business man, whom the Darrow Board found along the track, but recovery for business speeded on. Labor and the consumer, as Lincoln Steffens said of Max Eastman at the time of the Russian Revolution, waited at a local station while the express passed them by. For, after half-hearted attempts to enforce 7A, it was realized that reform could not accompany recovery. Prices on the other hand were inflated to the point where the real standard of living for the masses was reduced. Within the last year, therefore, we experienced an unprecedented wave of strikes, for labor became serious and took its future into its own hands again. A leftward sign in politics in 1935 was again imminent and the elections were close by.

Consider the President's awkward position. He had promised relief to the forgotten men, he had failed and he was fast losing control of the political situation. Hoover could mobilize support by calling his program "fascist", Huey Long and Father Coughlin had turned against him and were gaining portions of the discontented, while the radicals were making moves for a real Labor party. What was to be done to stem the tide of reaction against him? Only one clever move remained, and Roosevelt has made it—abolish the N. R. A.

At a moment when the Senate was deadlocked over the

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issue of how much longer to extend its life, he has secured an end to the bickering and is now set to win the masses back to him, to have them dissipate their energies again in the effort to re-establish a "planned capitalism". It does not take much imagination to realize with what relief President Roosevelt received the Supreme Court's decision rendering his program invalid. Nor does it require much insight to see that the President himself engineered the decision. It is more than sheer coincidence that the decision was rendered just as the N. R. A. was about to expire and that the liberals voted unanimously with the other Judges on the bench for its abolition. Even the newspapers occasionally let the cat out of the bag. Mr. Paul Mallon, Washington correspondent, writes in the June 3 issue of the San Francisco Chronicle: "The way the issue has played into Mr. Roosevelt's hands has caused a rumor to be circulated here that he knew of it in advance and was glad to get it. Also, another rumor that Supreme Court Justice Hughes conferred with the President about it. There is nothing in either of these tales." Of course, Mr. Mallon could not say there was anything in the rumors, even if he chose, for that would expose the whole deceit. The President has accomplished another neat trick, one that must now be covered up by wailing and weeping before the public. The Court's decision was no more dictated by the Constitution than was the Gold Clause decision—it was based upon political expediency.

What now shall we expect the course of events in the next few months to be? Wage cuts will be instituted, as already they have started, while prices for the basic commodities will remain high or continue upward. Indeed, this is what President Roosevelt and General Johnson themselves predict, accurately and purposefully. The run-around of reform versus recovery can be started all over again. The rate of profit for the large concerns has already been restored, recovery for them is an accomplished fact. The little man has been eliminated; now the average size firms can be driven out, leaving the monopolies in control of the field. Meanwhile the situation of labor will become worse. And once again Roosevelt can be its champion and the reactionaries seemingly oppose him.

The slogan for the new political campaign has been set. No longer will labor be able to blame its troubles on the N. R. A.,—that ended in May and the more intense suffering started after that date. From now on it will be "Roosevelt and Reform", a "New N. R. A.". Coughlin, William Green and many liberals have already fallen in line: the "money changers" must again be driven out. The President has removed responsibility for the future from himself and has revived his political chances enormously, while the revolt of the masses has safely been channelized.

The accuracy of this prediction will be tested by the future. At this moment, there is only one sign on the horizon which may finally negate it. It is just possible that the capitalist-controlled Administration has overshot its mark, that the masses will refuse again to be duped and that the movement for a Labor party will continue to grow. How they will go, events in California will soon make clear.



## LINCOLN STEFFENS SPEAKING--

THE OLD WORLD started an open war in China this week and ended one in South America. England and Germany are getting together on the Fascist line which the French are getting together with themselves against. Italy is busy in North Africa. In this country strikes are preparing, two big ones.

SEVERAL VERY conservative men have come courteously into my sick-room in the last few days, all troubled, all planless, nearly sightless. Our schools do not teach history apparently; or didn't. Teachers would probably be fired if they attempted to lead pupils to note well, as part of our business, the repetitions of history which affect us and the life stream we live in. And sometimes drown in. My callers were drowning in currents that they never heard of. Fascists who don't know the things they say are Fascism. And so sincere! One or two are reading. They will find out and my impression is they will revolt at their unconscious fascism.

JAMES J. BRADDOCK, not Max Baer, is the champion fist fighter of the world. An old fighter "came back", a down-and-outer came off the bread line and goes to the top. Wish all the down-and-outs would follow the new old Irish boxer.

THE QUINTS—the Dionne quintuplets—will be normal before the fall. If now the fall will be normal—

DR. EDWARD HUBBLE of Mt. Wilson Observatory, the astronomer who comes up here now and then and lets us look upon his serene face as he looks upon the faces of the stars, has been awarded a gold medal. He has added to our picture of the behavior of the universe. The Barnard gold medal is the recognition of this service and of the scientists' idea of rewards; they didn't give Dr. Hubble \$500,000,000, as the business world would have paid a man for a singular service. They gave him what the scientific world appreciates, a medal which he puts away. Wonder what he does do with it! It's the sign he probably cares for, that and the satisfaction in the accomplishment. There are such men; there can be more; that medal need not be gold.

BY THE WAY, a strike of ore that pans out \$2,000 a ton is reported from the Black Hills of South Dakota.

ACCORDING TO the Book, it's the poor we shall always have with us, not the rich. Nothing permanent about the nice people; flowers that fade and, as any gardener knows, should be clipped off in the economic interest of the bush.

SPEAKING OF the Omaha street car strike and rioting, Brisbane says one can't decide the right or wrong of it at a distance. I say you can't decide that question close up either. A strike is an economic conflict, not moral, and there is no wrong or right about it that reason can determine under our civilization.

I OFTEN wish the editor of this PACIFIC WEEKLY would edit my column; it's a comfortable habit of mine to lean on "the editor", leaving it to him to catch and kill foolish sayings I would regret. But he won't touch a word of mine; too busy. So here I am left alone out in the cold. Ole chief Dana kept an office cat that chewed up doubtful paragraphs but

Bassett hasn't even a cat. He leaves me "free" as I leave him. and I should not wonder if this "freedom" which even our sing at night around this placid town, the cats that nobody contributors enjoy were not the inspiration of the cats that owns.

"CRIME, COMMUNISM and other un-American practices," says a big Hearst daily. But—but there is nothing un-American about crime, Mr. Hearst, not according to the Hearst papers.

I SEE that our regular A. F. of L. unions are to purge the reds out of their organization. That's good. With the Communists and the A. F. of L. both working toward the same middle labor may get somewhere.

BIRDS AND flowers don't seem to have heard a thing about the depression, and have no sympathy with us. Snails too are uninformed. Maybe the insect world is out of step.

A BUSINESS MAN who has been thinking came in here the other day in some distress. He felt sick and was seeing his doctor. But his story to me was that he had run upon some flaws in his theories of money, finance and, in short, business. My

suggestion that he need not feel so bad; that it was not the truth that had gone back on him; that it was nothing but an hypothesis that had failed—that seemed to cheer him. And he saw and dilated upon the importance of the distinction between a conclusion and an hypothesis, between the truth and a theory. I hear many good minds going around with the Truth which sounds like a guess to me, an hypothesis. Children in school should be taught this protection against superstitions.

THE GROWTH of the welcome to PACIFIC WEEKLY is a wonder to others than the editor who can hardly articulate his surprise, etc. It's too bad to explain the mystery, but I account for it not so much by the contents, as by the impression given that now at last the Pacific Coast has a publication where any good thought or articulate feeling may be expressed. You'd have to go all the way East to find such a voice. It's a thin voice so far; we can't afford as yet to add more pages and make the thing thicker, but we will in time. Meanwhile the people who have things to say and are stopped from uttering them elsewhere may go on regarding PACIFIC WEEKLY as their organ. And those who have dollars to contribute may express their relief that way. It looks as if the Pacific Coast might have an organ of public opinion all its own someday soon.



## DOWN WITH PEACE!

BY WINTHROP RUTLEGE

THE original programs of the San Francisco Theatre Union announce that *Peace on Earth* is presented "with the cooperation of the E. E. P.". When the printing of more programs became necessary, the Theatre Union had planned to drop the abbreviation "E. E. P." and make the credit line read "with the cooperation of the Emergency Educational Program". This was done because Arthur H. Chamberlain, director of the E. E. P., had requested it in a letter to the Theatre Union.

But on June 12 there was an abrupt change in the picture. When the Theatre Union prints new programs the credit line will be omitted entirely. It was on June 12 that Mr. Chamberlain wrote a letter to Charles Bratt, of the *Peace On Earth* cast, politely and tactfully announcing that Mr. Bratt was fired from the E. E. P. Behind all this is the story, sometimes achieving comic opera heights and sometimes becoming touchingly pathetic, of the efforts being made to hamper *Peace On Earth* in its business of telling the playgoers how the war-machine rides over its opposition and how it pulls the innocent populations of the world into its maw.

Since last August Charles Bratt has been teaching current events classes in the E. E. P. and had been recognized by his superiors as one of the ablest teachers in that department. When the Theatre Union was formed and the production of *Peace On Earth* planned, he joined the cast, which was being directed by his brother, George Bratt.

In mid-May rehearsals began to take more time than Mr.

Bratt could give and still do justice to his E. E. P. classes. He made a request, therefore, to be transferred to dramatics and to be given credit (as is the E. E. P. custom) for time spent in rehearsing and acting. The request was relayed to Mr. Chamberlain, who appeared pleased with the plan and sent James Ramp, playwright and supervisor of E. E. P. dramatics, to see a rehearsal of *Peace On Earth* and report on it.

Ramp appeared at the rehearsal on May 17, witnessed two or three scenes, assured himself that Bratt did sufficient acting in the play to justify the transfer, and announced that he "thought it could be arranged".

He asked Bratt if the Theatre Union proposed to continue with plays of the type of *Peace On Earth* and was told that the organization planned to produce only plays with social significance. A few days later the details were arranged at a conference between Bratt, Chamberlain, Ramp and Miss Mooney, Chamberlain's secretary. Chamberlain insisted that the E. E. P. be given credit on the *Peace On Earth* programs, and after Bratt had referred the matter back to the theatre group, this was arranged. Chamberlain later wrote to Florence Wycoff, executive secretary of the Theatre Union, asking that "Emergency Educational Program" be spelled out on the programs and not abbreviated to E. E. P. He was informed that the programs already had been printed, but that his request would be carried out in future programs and other announcements.

*Peace On Earth* opened on May 31, and scored an imme-

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diate success because of its sincerity, its able construction and its straightforward pillory of war-making methods. It began to be talked about town and people unused to truth in strong doses decided there must be something radical about it. The theatre, it appears, is supposed to be a place of relaxation and make-believe. Any attempt to inject truth into it must be a violation of its ethics.

There must have been some brow-wrinking in the offices of the E. E. P., too, for on June 7 Mr. Chamberlain sent out a bulletin, a portion of which I quote:

"The classes of the E. E. P. are free to the public. When members of a class or group present a play, concert or other entertainment, and desire to charge admission, the following rules must be observed.

"1. Such play or entertainment must not be announced as under sponsorship of E. E. P. or S. E. R. A. if there is to be an admission charge. No poster or announcement may carry reference to E. E. P. or S. E. R. A." (my italics.)

The crusade against truth in the theatre then began to take form. The fire department questioned the safety of the building. Police reported complaints by neighbors of noise late at night. A Legionnaire of semitic ancestry was reported as having said "We'll get that bird on the E. E. P." Pressure was brought to bear against the sponsors of the production. One of them, Mrs. Bartley C. Crum, whose husband is a legal associate of John Francis Neylan, resigned. The rest remained.

In her letter of withdrawal from the board of sponsors, Mrs. Crum pleaded the press of household duties and declared she regretted that these prevented her from further association with the play, which she described as "an interesting and stimulating undertaking".

Meanwhile *Peace On Earth* was definitely establishing itself in the local theatrical arena, playing to enthusiastic capacity audiences.

Then, on June 12, Bratt received a long letter from Chamberlain. I quote a few of the more pointed and less repetitious paragraphs:

I regret exceedingly to tell you that the nature of the play "Peace On Earth", given at the San Francisco Theatre Union, is such that because of your connection with it, we are forced to separate you from the program. Regardless of the technical merits of the play, it is highly propagandist and brings in, through many of its lines, implications which are held in criticism by many people.

The point is, of course, as you know full well, that the Emergency Educational Program can in no way stand for propaganda of a nature that could be construed as communistic in its tendencies. And certainly "Peace On Earth" while apparently harmless, seems to be much more than radical in places.

We are told by the investigators at headquarters that several members of the advisory board such as appear on the letterhead and on the program of the Theatre Union, have already withdrawn their names because of the character of the play or what lies back of it.

As you may see, *Peace On Earth* is causing some copious perspiration in certain San Francisco circles. Mr. Chamberlain, I presume, wishes he had been a closer follower of the New York stage, whereon the play ran long enough to be classed by *The Billboard* magazine as a hit. Mr. Ramp, too, I imagine, finds it a little embarrassing not to have kept in closer touch with the medium for which he writes—and, I am told, writes very well. As for the E. E. P. and the government in

general, perhaps it is too much to ask of it that it should support a play which criticizes the biggest government-operated utility in the world, the war industry.

But *Peace On Earth* goes on just the same. It plans to move to a larger and better appointed theatre soon, and there is a large group of more or less prominent and responsible citizens determined to see that it is not interfered with. As for Bratt, he is unchastened by his experience with the E. E. P. and every night appears in the role of the professor who proclaims his opposition to war but breaks with the militant working men who agree with him and intend to do something about it.

"It is simply incredible," says Bratt, naively, "that this play which inaugurated the career of the Theatre Union of New York and established it as a successful Broadway producing unit in a five months' run, should be the object of the present attack in San Francisco. It is equally incredible that James Ramp, a playwright in his own name and, in his function of E. E. P. supervisor of dramatics, a student of modern drama, should have been unaware of the vital significance and international reputation of the play, *Peace On Earth*."

Those people who are seeking to get the play ruled off the boards should see it first, if only to stimulate their apparently atrophied senses of humor. For every action taken against the play only verifies what the play itself has to say about suppression in modern society. And if the liberals who are now supporting it should be influenced to withdraw that support, they will be behaving exactly as do the liberals in the drama—recanting in the face of a little pressure.

The free show of our modern civilization makes such uproarious comedy that one marvels how any play on a stage—even so jarring a play as *Peace On Earth*—can face the competition.



## YOUTH AND A LABOR PARTY

BY CLIFTON AMSBURY

**T**HE last few years have given final proof that in America there exist economic as well as social classes. And they also have proved that only two of the old social classes were based on common economic and political interests. The one is that "across the tracks", the other that "up on the hill". More and more it has become apparent that on the one side are those who struggle for existence, and on the other those who hire clerks to clip coupons for them and others to sweat the dividends for those coupons out of the rest of the population.

This realization of the community of interest of those who work (or would like to work) for a living has given rise all over the country to a movement for a labor party: a party of, by, and for the little fellow. Many organizations have approved the idea, but few have gone on record as to what they think this party should be like. One which has done so is the Northern California Regional Youth Congress (an affiliate of the American Youth Congress).

We went on record in favor of what the Illinois State Socialist Convention has since described as a "Federated Labor

Party". This is a form of organization which anticipated Upton Sinclair's only valid objection.

The Youth Congress considered the problems of youth in the present crisis, and they concentrated upon the problems of youth who are, or should be, working. These were grouped under the headings of War, Unemployment, Industry, Racial Minorities, Education, and Political Perspectives, and it is interesting to note that three of these committees considered it vital to institute a vigorous campaign against William Randolph Hearst because of his activities as a war-monger, an enemy of education, a politician, and a fascist.

Both the Committee on War and the Committee on Unemployment introduced resolutions against military control of the CCC camps, proposing organization of the boys to run the camps themselves. We also endorsed complete disarmament projects and *real* unemployment and social insurance. The social insurance bill we endorsed is the only one which, in the words of an economics professor, "recognizes that the essential feature of social insurance is redistribution of income and that the fundamental cause of unemployment and poverty is excess profits". This bill is the Lundein Bill, House Roll 2827, which was unanimously reported out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and has never been heard of since. Why? Because it proposed taxing *excess* profits, and *excess* incomes, and *excess* inheritances—because it would tax the big fellow and not the little fellow.

Under racial minorities we included people in colonies and semi-colonies, as well as here in the mainland of the United States. We considered that as long as the workers of America countenance the enslavement of Cubans and Filipinos, they cannot themselves expect freedom. And we proposed that here at home all races and nationalities must be organized together in order to win their common demands.

Above all the keynote was, "Organize! Unite!" We believe that in unity is strength.

All these things are questions the Labor Party, too, must

decide. But what kind of a labor party is to do it? The "liberal" politicians have decided it will be a Progressive Party with tried and true politicians (that is, themselves) in full control; the head of the EPICS has decided that it will be the Democratic Party with tried and true demagogues (that is, himself and Roosevelt) in full control; the Saint of San Simeon has decided that it will be a fascist party with tried and true misleadership (namely, Father Coughlin, Huey Long, and himself) in full control.

But east of the Mississippi and along the Pacific Coast the little fellows are organizing themselves. And the form of party which the Youth Congress endorsed is the only one which can really represent the people of America.

It is, as I have said, a federated labor party. It would, in the first place, be based on the rank and file movement in the trade unions. I say rank and file, because by and large the officialdom is neither representative nor progressive and because this labor party must be based throughout on membership control. And it must be based on the trade unions because they are at present the broadest working class organizations.

Second, the party would be based on rank and file control of other workers' groups, and especially of the workers' political parties. That means the EPICS, the Socialists, and all others. Because of the federated structure, none of these would be required to give up its place on the ballot. But the participating candidate with the most votes would become the Labor Party candidate in the general election. Thus if the EPICS join the Labor Party, every EPIC candidate who carries the Democratic primary is assured of being the Labor Party candidate. But if the EPIC candidate loses, there is another in reserve, and another chance for a worker to be elected. I don't see what possible objection Sinclair could have to this plan, if he is sincere.

And I believe he is sincere.



## A NEW YORK LETTER FROM ROBERT CANTWELL

**A**FTER almost two years of the Theatre Union, and particularly after the success of Clifford Odets' *Waiting for Lefty*, *Till the Day I Die* and *Awake and Sing*, socially conscious or revolutionary drama can no longer be said to be a novelty in what is left of the American theatre. A socially conscious Broadway of the character of *Parade*, however, is so great an innovation that the mere presence of such a spectacle is news, quite apart from the question of its value as entertainment, its importance as propaganda, or its commercial failure. The dramatic critics who have grown strangely eloquent in describing just how it fails to entertain, how it fails to arouse a fighting wrath against capitalism—though God help the playwright who hopes to agitate dramatic critics to fight against capitalism—and how certain it is to lose mon-

ey, have rather neglected the important point about *Parade*, which is that it is unprecedented. Experiments in the socially conscious, not to say working-class-conscious, drama have gone on for ten years, and in one sense the failures of such plays as John Howard Lawson's *Processional* have contributed their lessons to the relative success of *Stevedore* or *Waiting for Lefty*. But an attempt to charge a huge, awkward, fast-paced, highly-organized Broadway with social significance, to inject an other than sentimental meaning into popular songs, politics into skits and blackouts and tap dances, social satire into the graceful antics of chorus girls, was no less than audacious; and it is no wonder that the dramatic critics went home early. The comments of most seem to suggest they would have gone home

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just as early—emotionally, anyway—even if the show had been good.

*Parade* was written by Paul Peters and George Sklar, who wrote *Stevedore*; it was produced by the Theatre Guild after the Theatre Union and the Group Theatre had found it too expensive; it was distinguished by the performance of Jimmy Savo as well as by its originality; it was weakened to the point of catastrophe by the monotony of its mood, the high-school amateurishness of some of its skits and the operatic exaggerations of some of its serious dances, which were full of geometric postures in an approved modern style. Looking at revolutionary dancing representing *The Uprising of the Masses* gives you an idea that when the masses do rise they are going to come up flat-footed, at right angles, and with their eyes popping out of their heads. But Savo's clowning was often superb. This resourceful juggler with his huge pants, his wan and mysterious smile, his odd, senseless, but somehow secretly-triumphant tip-toeing runs across the stage, was trained in vaudeville and burlesque, and to an amazing extent, in *Parade*, he succeeded in giving the elaborate nonsense of vaudeville and burlesque a satirical twist, a revolutionary sting. The scene in which, as the owner of a factory whose workers are on strike, he attempted to run the plant himself, and became hopelessly involved in the machinery, baffled by malignant conveyors, intimidated by a vicious switchboard, would have made a conventional revue; it was typical revue material raised to the level of pointed political comment. Another skit in which Savo, frail and sly, attempted to steal a hot dog and found himself dodging great masses of policemen brought out the latent social satire of the old Keystone comedy tradition. Indeed, the major lesson of *Parade* was that the radical and revolutionary humorists have been trying too hard. Slap-stick comedy with its blustering cops and its hungry tramps, or such satiric pictures of the upper classes as were presented in Chaplin's *City Lights*, provide a body of native American humor that needs only sharpening and refining to serve as a valuable instrument of social observation. American satirists face a peculiar problem: their task is not so much that of breaking down a traditional and reactionary way of looking at social conflicts, but of breaking down a traditional and reactionary way of not looking at them at all.

Another item of cultural importance, also generously ignored by the daily book reviewers, has been the publication, under singular auspices, of Kenneth Fearing's *Poems*. The literary world that nodded politely to the work of the English radical poets, Auden and Spender and C. Day Lewis, passed over in silence a more important work closer to home. Fearing is a young poet who gained some reputation, several years ago, as an author of polished and conventional verse—Bridges is said to have praised his early work and to have pointed him out as one of the most promising of American poets. By the time he published *Angel Arms* in 1928 Fearing had broken with conventional poetic forms and archaic and conventional poetic language; he carried his distaste for all forms of artistic pretentiousness to the extreme point of earning his living, while writing his verse, by composing sex stories for the popular magazines. His poems were rejected by the commercial publishers, and were brought out by a group of poets who raised \$270 to print an edition. The edition has already paid for itself and actually made money, thus upsetting a cherished publishers' dogma that poetry can only be published at a loss.

Fearing's poems constitute a kind of Season in Hell, with the season the present and hell contemporary America, with

demons and damned, tormentors and tormented, all but indistinguishable. The opening poem, *Conclusion*, with its terrible catalogue of the punishment of the yes-man—"you will give praise to all things, praise without end"—strikes more deeply into the heart of the literature of apology and extenuation than any single American work:

Always, more than wise, you will be found with the many resolved against the few;

But you will be a brother, on second thought, to all men.

In *Winner Take All*, with its refrain, "you are innocent", the poet passes judgment on the figures who appear in many of the poems, the routine killer, the bought judge:

And you are innocent of what has to happen

innocent, when they put you out in the street, when they look at you and laugh, when you grow old and fade away, when they strap you in the electric chair, tell them all you are innocent:

In *Resurrection* he lists the memories that will crowd the world of the damned, "the kisses, real or imagined", the friendly voice of the killer", "the triumphant smile of the duped". His vision of hell includes a glimpse of the "ten million dead returned to life, shot down again, again restored", of the child, "Nursed on government bonds. Cut its teeth on a hand grenade. Grew fat on shrapnel . . . Laughed at the bayonet through its heart". Over it broods the smiling head of Franklin Devoe, murmuring "My friends, my friends" in radios and newsreels, as the state is saved again, with three more dead, six shot, as pickets are fed vomit-gas, herds killed, crops burned, clinics closed:

You heard the gentleman, with automatic precision, speak the truth.

Cheers. Triumph.

And then, mechanically, it followed the gentleman lied. Deafening applause. Flashlights, cameras, microphones. Floral tribute. Cheers.

Down Mrs. Hogan's alley, your hand with others reaching down among the ashes, cinders, scrapiron, garbage, you found the rib of sirloin wrapped in papal documents. Snatched it. Yours by rights, the title clear.

Looked up. Saw lips twitch in the smiling head thrust from the museum window. "A new deal."

And ran. Escaped. You returned the million dollars. You restored the lady's virginity.

Fearing's wasteland has little of the spiritual drought of which Eliot has written; it is turbulent, bloody, a place of evictions and suicides, filled with incessant radio music and the teeming legends of movies and cheap fiction, swollen to nightmarish proportions—but out of it his vision of a new life rises simply and clearly, an affirmation that carries within it no note of sentimentality or evasion:

Sky, be blue, and more than blue; wind, be flesh and blood:  
flesh and blood, be deathless;  
walls, streets, be home;  
desire of millions become more real than warmth and  
breath and strength and bread—

Few modern American poets have tried to deal with as much of contemporary experience as Fearing has faced; in comparison with his work the windy rhetoric of Paul Engle seems as hollow as a campaign speech, and even the brutal

credo of the gifted California poet, Yvor Winters, who has faced the modern world and decided that

*Treading Change with savage heel  
We must live and die by steel*

seems a literary affectation, a stock poetic attitude with little relation to specific contemporary problems. More than any other writer Fearing sums up the attitude of his generation; and in time the publication of his new poems may be recognized for what it is—a cultural event of first importance.

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## AMERICAN OIL

BY GEORGE HEDLEY

LAST week, for the first time in more than three months, I saw a movie. It was puzzling in spots: Why, for example, was Josephine Hutchinson given the lead while Jean Muir (who is definitely the "Hester" type) had a mere bit? Why did it take ten days for a cable message to get from Honolulu to Yokohama? And, above all, why the fluctuation between stringent criticism of a great corporation and implicit approval of a hero too stupid to understand the company's manoeuvres?

But the denouement made the first two queries mere quibbles, the third difficulty a triumph of brilliant direction, and the picture as a whole a genuine masterpiece. Having killed his unborn child, ruined his best friend, and chosen to rescue from a Cantonese swamp not his wounded assistant, but a handbag full of the corporation's gold—the hero fell mortally wounded; and the story ended with the company's man and the company's cash lying in the swamp.

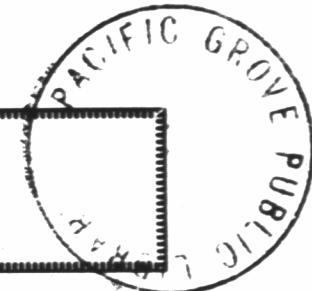
—But instead of Mickey Mouse, there came a coda to the tale. In some inexplicable fashion Stephen Chase (Pat O'Brien) was rescued and resuscitated. Followed much dickering about promotion, with the hero still bewildered by the company's procedure. Whereupon his wife intervened—using as her major weapon another improbable and unexplained detail. At last New York telephoned Shanghai; and left the inference that the final solution, just and intelligent, lies always with the number one boss captains of industry. The happy ending was that Steve became first assistant in the Oriental district . . . Just a hint that the former director got his hand in at the finish, when it appeared (oh, very subtly) that the wife claimed for herself the credit which her husband still gave to the company.

Having missed the opening, I survived a Hearst Metro and a "beauty chorus" in order to see it. And here came the explanation, in the words of the company's lecturer to the three-year contract laddies: "Oil for the lamps of China, gentlemen—American oil!"

P. S. I have been asked why I have made no reference to (a) the fact that, while there is a pious subtitle declaring non-identity of "Atlantis" with any known oil corporation, the Communists are overtly represented as such; and (b) the portrayal of the Chinese Communist leader as a smart-aleck product of a British public school. I am disposed to reply that (a) repre-

sents an unwitting compliment on the part of Hollywood, which seems to guess that Communists are less sensitive to scrutiny than are corporations; and that (b) is a wholly unjustified tribute to British public schools—one might wish that they did produce radical leaders.

## MUSIC



BY ALAN CAMPBELL

CALIFORNIA this summer is paying tribute to more than one universally recognized genius through the inauguration of music and drama festivals to be held in several parts of the state. Pasadena and Stanford University are concentrating on drama with Shakespeare festivals while Berkeley is enjoying a cycle of chamber music by Brahms. Carmel will be doubly fortunate as its summer series include not only a Bach Festival, but experimental and standard drama and a festival of the dance.

There will be close to twenty solo artists taking part in the four Bach performances, July 18 to 21 at Carmel. The Carmel Festival is to be directed by Ernst Bacon. It is sponsored by the Carmel Music Society and the Monterey Peninsula Orchestra and the concerts will be presented by the Denny-Watrous Gallery.

AT THE crucial moment San Francisco came to the aid of its symphony and music lovers of the bay region and peninsula are happy to know that the series of Open-Air Concerts shall not be abandoned this year at the lovely Woodland Theatre, Hillsborough.

The Philharmonic Society of San Mateo County instituted these delightful series ten summers ago, and the beauty and intimacy of the Woodland Theatre has already become a tradition. More than twenty world-renowned conductors have given symphony concerts at Woodland and the summer symphonies have always maintained a high standard both as to performance and choice of program.

Every effort is being made this year to make the present series outstanding in celebration of Woodland's tenth "summer symphony" anniversary. There will be four Sunday afternoon concerts this year, each under the direction of an eminent conductor. It is fitting that Alfred Hertz should open the series on the afternoon of June 30—his familiarity with the personnel of the San Francisco Symphony assures a richly interpreted and varied program. Much interest is already being displayed in the second concert, July 7, for on that date Richard Lert, (formerly of the State Opera, Berlin) will wield the baton and Harold Bauer as guest soloist will play the Schumann Concerto. On July 21 Basil Cameron will make his debut as a conductor at Woodland. Mr. Cameron is regarded in England as a singularly sensitive and intelligent conductor. The final concert, August 4, will be conducted by Jose Iturbi whose poetic interpretation of Debussy's "L'apres-midi d'un Faune" last summer won him a host of devoted admirers. Information regarding season and single tickets may be had from Alan Campbell at the Carmel Bookshop.

# KODAK PICTURE CHILDREN AT PLAY

—JOHN DOBBS

# BOOKS

# **WHERE DREISER LEFT OFF**

**JUDGMENT DAY**, by James T. Farrell. (Vanguard Press)  
\$2.50

(Reviewed by Edward E. Cassady)

JUST ten years ago Theodore Dreiser published *An American Tragedy*, dedicated to the thesis that distorted values, arising from a distorted social system, are the heritage of modern American youth. Through the character of Clyde Griffiths, Dreiser revealed youth's frustrated desires for satisfactory living in a plutocratic civilization. Clyde's failure to achieve any sort of real human satisfaction, his questionings, his fumblings, his futile attempts at orienting himself, if not his disastrous conclusion, are representative of countless of his fellow-creatures during the first two decades of the century.

Comprehensive as is Dreiser's work, it tells only a fraction of the whole story. Numerous writers have taken up where he left off, relating their versions of a common but by no means hackneyed theme.

The best of these books that I have read is the story of Studs Lonigan, contained in a trilogy by James T. Farrell, a young Chicago novelist of leftist convictions. The final volume of the trilogy, *Judgment Day*, brings to a close the career of an Irish-American young man, William Lonigan, better known by his gang as Studs, whose life from early adolescence to the ripe age of twenty-eight is recorded meticulously against a vivid background of Chicago lower middle-class society. The earlier volumes, *Young Lonigan* and *The Young Manhood of Studs Lonigan*, unfold the story of Studs' and his friends' emergence from childhood during the pre-war years and their thwarted maturation during the war-time hysteria and the post-war boom years under Harding and Coolidge—the years of stock speculation, prohibition, gangsters, sex movies, the years when King Profits sat securely on his throne. The second volume ends shortly after the stock crash in 1929.

With the coming of the depression the day of reckoning is at hand, and *Judgment Day*, as the title indicates, covers this period, more specifically the year 1931, when bank and busi-

ness failures and unemployment and evictions were laying men low by the millions. Studs Lonigan, now in his late twenties, his health wrecked by overindulgences, lacking any social orientation despite school, church and family, faces the problem not only of finding a job but also of finding himself. He finds neither. Therein lies his tragedy.

The interest in *Judgment Day*, even more than in the first two books, is peculiarly divided between the characters and the *milieu*, which are integrated with such consummate skill that they are not in fact separable. Identifying himself with the characters, particularly with Studs, the reader observes the confusing detail of external things and forces affecting them, but the penetrating reader does not lose himself in their chaotic impressions and prejudiced judgments. At the same time he remains aloof with the author and sees working out before him a pitiful group of human beings striving vainly to play the game of life with nearly all the cards stacked against him.

The reader sees, as poor Studs and his gang cannot see, that the values held most in veneration are false and malignant, that the teachings of the school, the church, the movies, the newspapers and the parents are maladjusted to the realities, that an amazing lie is being perpetrated upon humanity by a ruthless economic system. He sees people so involved in the wretched machine that they blame anything but the machine for their destruction in its pitiless cogs.

When Studs loses nearly all his savings in worthless utilities stock he has the urge to smash the jaw of his friend, an employee of the company, who sold him the stock. Faced with eviction from his mortgaged home and a poverty-stricken old age, Paddy Lonigan, Studs' father, mumbles blasphemies against the "International Jew Bankers", about whom he has learned from a certain priest over the radio. When real estate prices collapse, the Lonigans and their neighbors blame the Negroes who were filtering into "white neighborhoods". And the Reds get cursed "for making conditions worse". Never does the responsibility for the economic trouble go where it belongs.

Inklings of the possibility of better things to come are revealed from time to time throughout the book, but always from the outside of the social group under observation. Toward the end of the book is a forcefully-conceived chapter that throws light on the otherwise lurid picture. Discouraged and depressed, contemplating the approaching death of his son and the inevitable eviction from his home, Paddy Lonigan stands watching a triumphant parade of radical workers. He becomes impressed with the fact that they are happy and that he is unhappy. Unable to understand why, he slumps into a speakeasy and gets drunk.

Much might be said about Farrell's skill, of the incredible verisimilitude of action and dialogue and settings, of the subtlety with which every pertinent thought and feeling of the characters are revealed. But reading a few pages from the book at random would convey what a criticism cannot. And if you read a few pages you will not be able to set the book down until you have read them all. It is that kind of a book.

#### **CRITICS BOWLED OVER**

**PAT<sup>H</sup>S OF GLORY**, by Humphrey Cobb. (Viking Press)  
\$2.50

(Reviewed by Lincoln Steffens)

**T**HE critics have been bowled over by this first novel, which some of them have read twice and enjoyed twice. It is a vivid narrative of the war so swift and dramatic, so sensational

and objective that writers must be interested to go back to see just how restrained calm can achieve such effects in the art of writing. I don't know how; I haven't read it twice. I wasn't bowled over the first time. To me *Paths of Glory* is a true story of some ordinary soldiers who were sacrificed to the purpose of their general, in an unfamiliar way. I am wondering if the extraordinary triumph of the tale isn't an effect of my old art, muckraking; muckraking beautifully done.

The French soldiers chosen, by the author, are distinct and different types, and you meet them casually coming back from the fighting front for a much-needed rest opposite an impregnable German post that has resisted several attacks. G. H. Q. has to take it. The general, a powerful, vain but wilful commander, makes up his mind to take it; there's a decoration in it for him. (If this is a muckraking story it suggests abolishing military medals, by the way; quite by the way. It suggests the abolition of war and all that war dishonors, first). The colonel objects to an attempt on that point of the German line and also to the use of his tired troops; in vain. The general gives the order and is backed up at headquarters. The attack is ordered. Defeat is almost immediate and the circumstances thereof, and the loss, are so obvious that headquarters and all on-looking officers can see that the attempt was an error. But the general, appalled, decides to blame the defeated division and to make his record, orders sections of his line shot for cowardice. Dissuaded from that extremity, he modifies the order on the suggestion of a sympathetic fellow-officer to one man from each of four companies; four innocent examples to be tried by court martial and summarily shot.

A lot of the personal politics of officers and men is shown. Typical common politics it is; as ordinary and dirty as in a city government, but at the front in a war where life and death stalk, the crookedness is shocking. And this book is appalling in this way. The helplessness of the men, the inevitability of the "disciplining", the military "bunk", stagger the imagination. Humphrey Cobb gets that into his book. And he certainly lays bare the formal injustice of military justice. Having heard or seen such raw wrongs at the front one revolts and rejoices at the plain telling of them. We should have more of it even though it cloud the *Paths of Glory* and hurt war. Mr. Cobb sees and makes you see the four "cowards" through to their terrible ends. No, Cobb lets the officers let one man go untried and unshot; he had the name and might be really a relative of a senator of France. There wasn't time to enquire and the soldier was extremely "independent". Must have somebody behind him. The others were shot. And the reader is shot and the officers ought to be shot.

My feeling, when I read it through too late into the night, was that *Paths of Glory* was an ordinary, typical tale of an

army at war, but told by a reporter who can see, feel and write. I would rather have him than his very good book. But you read it; even if you have been through the war; it will hit you with what you missed by taking service as a matter-of-course. Only the kids marked off for the next war, the schoolchildren are not to read it.

### A VERY SAD BLURB

*HUNGRY MEN*, by Edward Anderson. (Doubleday, Doran & Co.) \$2

(Reviewed by Tom Kromer)

You will see no Jesus Christ looks in the eyes of Edward Anderson's *Hungry Men*, no working stiffs dying of malnutrition on lice-infested blankets of three-decker bunks in the missions, no soup-lines that stretch for blocks in the city streets and never start moving. In a word, you find no Hungry Men. When one of Mr. Anderson's puppets gets a gnawing in his guts, he takes him up to a backdoor or a restaurant and feeds him. When Mr. Anderson's hero, one Acel Stecker, is mooning on the waterfront over a respectable two-bit whore he has fallen in love with, you will never guess what happens so I might as well tell you. The Communist in the book hands him fifty bucks and says here, take this dough for I will not be needing it, and make a home for the gal. In "this land of plenty where nobody starves", Mr. Anderson would get thrown off a freight train if he pulled some of these yarns on the two or three hundred stiffs with no more notches in their belts.

The blurb on *Hungry Men* is very sad, and at first you will be very sad, too, when you read it. But after a while you will not be very sad for at the end Edward says, "But the American isn't going to turn Socialist or Communist, at least not in this generation. I wanted to write something to explain it. America is rich. There is plenty and nobody is actually going to die of hunger. In *Hungry Men* I have tried to show what I mean." It is to be hoped that with the publishing of *Hungry Men* Edward is safe back at the family hearthstone. He should not be traipsing around the country. He might get run over by a train. Only once in the book do you think he is maybe too smart to go to sleep on the track. That is when his hero, Acel, "starts wanting to know why this man has a chauffeured Packard, and he can't get his three-dollar shoes half-soled." But you will see in the last chapter that Edward is only joshing when he has Acel say this. For Acel, through rugged individualism, makes himself the head of a three-piece band. They are sauntering down the street ready to toot their horns for an honest penny when they are invited to play the "Internationale". Horror of horrors! Acel bloodies the nose of the one-eyed drunk who suggested it, lands in court, and instead of being tossed into the hoosegow, is complimented by the judge for refusing to hold any truck "with this hymn or song or whatever it is of a corrupt foreign government". Acel's little band re-names itself the "Three Americans" on the spot, gets its picture in the paper, and a job to play at a forthcoming American Legion ball. Acel always knew "there was a survival of the fittest law. The strong are always going to have more than the weak. I'm sittin' in this dump here and the reason for it is because I'm not strong enough to be sittin' in Childs. However, I'll be eatin' in Childs before it ends."

We are not told how long the author of *Hungry Men* was on the fritz, but we are told he was on it long enough to make his book a human and authentic document. We are told the



book contains no propaganda, and it is true that *Hungry Men* could run serially next to the "Thank God For Our Supreme Court" editorial in the San Francisco *Examiner*.

The book is without objective, rambling, the characters wooden and unnatural. It is the story of Acel Stecker, an unemployed musician, who finds himself one night in a mission, one night flopping on the benches in a seamen's hall. He gets a job pearl diving on an excursion boat, quits, meets a girl, sleeps with her a while and leaves. He meets a Communist. The Communist is appropriately enough disposed of by being shot by the cops while trying to get better conditions at the Seamen's Hall.

He meets two other musicians, brothers, and they sprawl long hours on the grass in the parks and waste long paragraphs accusing each other of having "female trouble". They finally, much to the reader's satisfaction, get some instruments and start their band. They are getting along all right and only waiting for the big break to come and it does come in the guise of the American Legion as the aftermath of the "Internationale" episode. You leave the book with the glad assurance that though the depression go on forever, Acel remains a beacon light for impoverished musicians who have a yen to eat at Childs.

If you thumbed your nose at Arthur Brisbane and sold the country short in 1929, and want to see all the wonderful things that happen to Acel Stecker "from gutter to orchestra leader", you should read *Hungry Men*. If you are one of the 22,000,000 in Mr. Hopkins' little Christian Endeavor group who have landed big time jobs for refusing to play the "hymn of a corrupt foreign government", you will enjoy the book and the coincidence. If you have read all the Horatio Alger books and would like to get the same story with a depression slant, you will not be able to put it down until the "Three Americans" get their last encore at this gala ball the American Legion is putting on.

On the other hand, if you are one of the 22,000,000 who is not musically inclined, if perhaps you are one of Hughie Johnston's "cry babies", who "can't take it" after six years on the tail-end of Mr. Babson's business Cycle "which will begin to show an upward trend in July", if after six years of soggy potatoes and red beans, every time you spit, you're spitting pink, there will be no stopping you from ramming *Hungry Men* down the privy, and no stopping you from disrupting a lot of good bands at American Legion balls in a mad yen to get your hands on Edward Anderson, screaming all the while that lusty yell with which he ends the book. "I got some ideas, by God." (This novel was a \$1,000 prize winner.)

### ONLY BANANA PEDDLERS

**PRIVILEGED CHARACTERS**, by M. R. Werner. (Robert McBride & Co.) \$3.75

(Reviewed by Anne Hawkins)

Books like *Privileged Characters* link into the American tradition of protest against "pull"—protest that talks itself out, that reads and agrees with a 500-page book and does nothing. Mr. Werner's own lackadaisical conclusion: "In order to insure that even the predatory individuals may survive, it seems necessary to take financial and political control out of the hands of men whose impotence is more dangerous even than their selfishness. Unless they become willing cheerfully to reconcile their personal desires for power and wealth to the needs of the community, they have staring them in the face

that system which has been so drastically successful in Russia." He does not say whether he thinks the privileged will "cheerfully" adapt themselves; nor does he nominate anyone to clean them out of government when, as, and if they don't. Facing his own collection of facts, he can expect neither business—for that is the privileged—nor the government itself—networked with graft, held together by that network, powered by the electric wires of that network—to do the job. The book shows why Senate investigations—so often embarrassing—are allowed to happen. The Senate rakes up a situation, simply, lest a worse thing befall. A Senate investigation means that a fool is taking the rap, that the fool's rivals (or companions) are hastening to advertise themselves as moralists. The Blood Purge technique.

*Privileged Characters* is fascinating not for its major revelations—which have all been revealed before, the book being a compilation from Senate records—but for the details by the way. For instance, trivia like Gaston Means' summary of Mellon and his foes: "They are like banana peddlers when you get to know them."

Only Republican banana peddlers are exposed in this book; but you can't have everything.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### REACTIONS TO EPIC LETTERS

Editor, Pacific Weekly,

Sir:

Here are a few of my reactions to your correspondence this week (June 14). They result from my participation in a half-dozen more or less highly successfull united fronts.

First Al Sessions:

Al was a Communist, so he says, in 1920, and formed certain opinions. May I quote Upton Sinclair (Boston, chapter VII, section IX): "As Federal Judge Anderson of Boston said when the facts came out in his court: 'It is perfectly clear on the evidence before me that the government owned and operated a part, at least, of the Communist Party.' " The



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lingering influences of this period of government control were eliminated finally by the "purges" of the late '20's, and cannot longer be held against the Communists.

I agree with Al that the *Western Worker* has contained some gems of class-angling—almost as many as the Epic-angling in the *Epic News*. I think studies of these two papers and a little muckraking on Al Sessions' trail would produce swell articles for PACIFIC WEEKLY.

And a "social-fascist", as I understand the term, is one who, by talking radical leads the workers into a capitalist party and prevents them from (to quote Mr. French) demonstrating against fascism.

Which brings us to the other letter which accuses the communists of advocating a "hodgepodge of reforms which, if put in effect, would preserve capitalism". And he uses this as an argument against the United Front (Lincoln Steffens' capitals).

He also says the Communist Party is only a propaganda society and that is another argument against the united front.

Are these allegations valid?

He also says, "And do Communists propose to smash capitalism? Not that I ever heard of!"

Mr. French knows a lot about Communists for one who has never read either capitalist or communist publications. For if he had he would have heard plenty.

I assume communists approve and advocate "propaganda" and certain "reforms" for the same reasons I do:

1. To keep enough people alive long enough to have a revolution;
2. To embarrass capitalism as much as possible;
3. To prevent fascism;
4. To show people they cannot get even the meagrest demands from a republican form of government (what Sinclair calls "democracy", what the communists call "bourgeois democracy");
5. To show them they can get any demand through pure democracy (i.e. mass pressure).

This is a program "for something, not just agin something". And what have you, Mr. French, besides just a "protesting negation"?

You want them to "join the Democratic Party, learn something about revolution, and go to work in earnest". You joined the Democratic Party last fall, but you evidently neglected a swell chance to learn something about counter-revolution.

But we of the Youth Congress endorsed a federated labor party project which will still let you play with the Democrats in the primaries. A federated labor party will give the workers extra chance for success. It defeated fascism in France and it can do the same in America—if it is given a chance.

Berkeley, Calif.

Clifton Amsbury

### HITS AT SESSIONS

Editor, Pacific Weekly,

Sir:

In PACIFIC WEEKLY of June 14 appears a letter from Al Sessions, an Epic-Democrat, upholding Upton Sinclair in rejecting a united front with the Communists.

There are four political parties in California, all striving to abolish Capitalism and establish a worker's government, and only one of them is willing to cooperate with the others, and that one is the Communist Party.

It is as if four sailors were steering for the same port, all taking different sea-lanes, and each paddling his own little

canoe.

Sessions says, "Sinclair has a plan to set up a collectivist world for the unemployed within the shell of our Capitalist structure". Why have a Capitalist structure? Our forefathers didn't do it that way. They fought their way out with a united front, and put an end to British rule.

Does Mr. Sessions remember how the Democrats swallowed the Populist party and what a black eye the Socialists received by endorsing LaFollette?

I admired LaFollette for his sincerity, but Socialism will just not function within the shell of a Republican-Capitalist structure any better than the shell of a Demo-Capitalist structure. We'll have to bust the shell.

Mr. Sessions said he was arrested for belonging to the Communist-Labor party. Sure. Twenty years ago Socialists were arrested for the same reason Sessions was—because they were at that time militant, a menace to Capitalism.

Industrial organizations are making some progress in their efforts to get away from craft unionism. The One Big Union idea has taken root and is thriving, and now if the workers get together in One Big Political party, and all pull together, there is hope for results. This may be accomplished some time, but why wait? NOW is the time. Too many precious years have already been wasted jangling over tactics. Let's forget the past, and proceed to abolish the abominable system of wage-slavery in "our" country, the thing we have TALKED about doing for a generation.

Berkeley, Calif.

United Frontier

### SINCLAIR ERRORS

Editor, Pacific Weekly,

Sir:

While I was not at the Epic convention, I have painstakingly followed accounts of it both in the *Epic News* and the *Western Worker*, as well as the reports of various Epic delegates. To all who are willing to make an objective analysis, it should be obvious that Upton Sinclair is committing every error that social democratic leadership has ever committed, leaving the door wide open for a Fascist movement. With the recent examples of Italy, Germany and Austria before us, we should surely not blindly repeat, step by step, the policies that we know have led to the rise of Hitler and Mussolini.

Most striking in the reports that I heard made by the delegates to the convention was their blind hero-worship of Sinclair. The bulk of the reports consisted in eulogies, such as, "Sinclair is the greatest leader, not only in California, or the United States, but in the entire world." The fact that the convention was highly undemocratic is established beyond a shadow of a doubt by any record of the proceedings (as in the excellent article by James Martin, in the last issue of the *Pacific Weekly*). The fact that this dictatorial control was not resented, or even recognized, by many of the delegates themselves, is the most alarming feature of all. No leader, whether he be a Lincoln, a Lenin, or least of all a Sinclair, is to be trusted if he cuts himself loose from the masses, and tries to run a dictatorship from above. Blind hero-worship is the seed of Fascism; it is too easily converted into a tool of deception of the masses for benefit of the capitalists. In essence, there is little difference—regardless of personality—between the movements of Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and Upton Sinclair—and Hitler and Mussolini, who are nominally anti-capitalist, and "socialists" of a sort.

Berkeley, Calif.

Joseph Baras

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## JUST AT RANDOM PACIFIC WEEKLY TAKES THESE FROM SCORES AND SCORES OF THE LIKE:

"I find myself looking forward each week to Saturday because it brings Pacific Weekly with your fearless and pointed editorial comments to whet the mind . . . The whole policy of your paper is a satisfaction." —Frances Goehring Kroese, Alameda, Calif.

"You are getting better and better with Pacific Weekly. This last issue was so good that I have had to read it over three times to make sure it was all there again." —J. McCann, C.H.C. Camp 26, Big Sur, Calif.

"Pacific Weekly is great. I have felt the need of a magazine through which I could keep in touch with California. Your magazine supplies this need admirably." —A professor at Chapel Hill, N. C.

"The paper stock of Pacific Weekly, the ink, the type, length of line, leading, arrangement, etc., combine to make the most readable periodical I know of." —Herman de Fremery, San Francisco.

"Your magazine is one of the best intellectual periodicals it has ever been my privilege to read. You merit utmost success." —Lew Serbin, San Francisco.

"Pacific Weekly sure hits the spot, and fills a long-felt want in this potentially good west of ours." —Ivon R. Beaver, Yucaipa, Calif.

"I want to tell you that you are very badly needed out here in this Western fog of prejudices. Through you I have made the acquaintance of a magazine that means business." —Peter Guldbransen, Berkeley, Calif.

**WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE YOUR REACTION  
WOULD BE?  
HERE'S HOW TO FIND OUT**

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